Speech Acts and Pragmatic Transfer in English Compliment Responses of Pashto Speakers

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ABSTRACT*: Employing cross-generational perspective to speech acts, this study attempts to investigate how Pashto-speaking Pakistani university students and teachers respond to compliments, and how the choices of both the generations are affected through pragmatic transfer by Pashtun culture in relation to age. Participants included 155 teachers and students. Following a mixed methods approach, the study included two primary sources of data: discourse completion tasks (DCTs) and semi-structured interviews. The collected compliment responses were categorized and analysed according to Herbert's Taxonomy (1990). Quantitative data revealed that acceptance was the most favoured strategy used by both the generations. However, the two groups exhibited considerable differences in the types of politeness strategies used and the extent of pragmatic transfer they demonstrated in their Compliment Responses (CRs). In the use of politeness strategies, for instance, it was found that compliments made on spoken language ability and character were responded too differently by the teachers and the students. Pragmatic transfer, on the other hand, was evident in the students' responses in two main scenarios but was less evident in the teachers' responses. The students, however, faced challenges in judging the sincerity of the compliments given. The study has practical social implications of speech act and politeness strategies while emphasizing the need for greater intercultural awareness and competence among the speakers interacting in cross-cultural situations.*

Introduction

The speakers of any language use a unique set of regular expressions when performing a variety of speech acts, such as greetings, apologies, compliments etc. Moreover, since language and culture are inextricably interlinked to each other, language is believed to be a verbal expression of a particular culture.

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Hence, culture determines linguistic behaviours of a particular speech community (Ziaei, 2012). In other words, the socio-cultural and sociolinguistic norms prevailing in a particular speech community, largely determine, what they say, and how they say. However, when in a communicative encounter, speakers of different cultures interact with each other, they consciously or unconsciously come up with their culturally-transmitted social norms into play.

Compliment, a speech act that functions as "social lubricants", is a significant aspect of daily communicative interactions (Wolfson, 1983, p. 89). Therefore, complimenting is an important social phenomenon that is universal and intrinsic to almost all the cultures around the globe. Compliment, according to Holmes (1988), is a speech act that explicitly or implicitly attributes credit for some good, valued positively by the speaker. Compliments are used to please, prompt, motivate, appreciate, greet, attraction and attention etc. (Tammam, 1999). Compliments and compliment responses (CRs), according to Herbert (1990), needs to be researched since their functions vary in different settings. Generation is one of the most important variables that constitutes culture. Hence, there is a need for research study that delves upon the complimenting behaviour from generational perspective as well.

As there is dearth of such studies (cross-generational) in pragmatics, according to Rose & Kasper (2001), the present research is an attempt to bridge up the gap by investigating compliment responses (CRs) from university teachers and students' generational perspective in Pakistan (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). To achieve this end, data was collected from 155 participants (30 teachers and 125 students), consisted of almost equal numbers of males and females. 155 compliment responses were recorded, using discourse completion tasks (DCTs) as instrument, which was followed by interviews from the 12 respondents (3 from each group of the participants). To determine the compliment response types, Herbert's Taxonomy (1990) was followed.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To find out differences in politeness strategies that both the generations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa university teachers and students use when responding to compliments.

2. To find out evidence of pragmatic transfer in the compliment responses by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa university teachers and students.

Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How do both the generations of teachers and students of the universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa differ in politeness strategies when responding to compliments?

2. Is there any evidence of pragmatic transfer in the compliment responses by both the generations?

Literature Review

Compliment responses (CRs), like compliments, are "worth studying because, like all speech acts, they can show us the rules of language use in a speech community" (Yuan, 2001, p. 245). A compliment response generally refers to the reaction of compliment receiver (linguistic as well as paralinguistic expressions). Herbert (1986) argues that a CR is an acknowledgement of the complimenter's endeavours to appreciate either one's action or one's behaviour. In other words, a CR is commonly perceived as a reply the compliment receiver gives to the complimenter for the appreciation of his/her performance or attributes. The type of compliment and the social relation between the interlocutors, says Alqarni (2017), are key factors regarding compliment responses.

Studies on Compliments and CRs – An Overview

In Persian context, Sarkhosh and Alizadeh (2017) investigated the shifting CR patterns and norms across generations within the same speech community. To achieve the objectives of the study, 272 participants were selected from among the high school teachers and students. To elicit required data for the study, a DCT consisting of complimenting situations was used. The findings of the survey showed that the new generation of Persian, regardless of gender, have changed their CR patterns and frequently accepted compliments. This shift is thought to be the result of a shift in the interpretation and concept of politeness and the influence of English culture through the new generation's exposure to English media, the Internet, TV series and movies.

In Chinese context, He (2012) attempted to examine compliment responses from a cross-generational perspective. Her study was an attempt to delve into the dynamics of politeness in Chinese. To achieve her ends, she adopted a discursive

approach. The findings revealed that both the groups of participants tended to use different CR strategies. For example, participants of older generation tended to frequently employ 'Rejection', while the younger generation preferred 'Acceptance'. The study concluded that the two generations of Chinese differed the way they conceptualize the notion of politeness possibly because of the participants' exposure to socialization of pre and post China's reform.

Another such investigation was conducted by Alharbi (2017). Her study aimed at how Saudi females from two generations respond to compliments in an educational setting, and how their CR choices were affected by Saudi culture in relation to gender, pragmatic transfer and generation. The study revealed that acceptance was the most favoured strategy used by both the generations when they responded to compliments. The study also revealed that the two groups exhibited considerable differences in the types of politeness strategies used and the extent of pragmatic transfer they demonstrated in their CRs. Moreover pragmatic transfer was more evident in the students' response in the main scenarios compared to the teachers.

Alsalem (2015), in his recent research, studied CRs of Saudi-Arabian students studying and staying in USA. The findings of the study revealed that Saudi students showed a greater tendency to transfer their success to their teachers when they responded to compliments on work. Based on the results, the study concluded that there are more similarities than difference in terms of CRs. Hence, the findings contradicts Holmes' (1986) observation Western cultures tend to accept compliments more than the non-western ones. This phenomena may be attributed to the flourishing of globalization.

Farghal and Haggan (2008) investigated complimenting behaviour of Arabic-speaking EFL students of Kuwaiti universities from cross-cultural pragmatic perspective. The results of the study showed that despite the fact that the majority of the responses the participants came up with, were in English, Arabic was incorporated in a reasonable number of responses, indicating pragmatic transfer. They quoted the following examples for evidence:

A: "I like your hairstyle!"

B: "That is your ðoog ('taste')". (p, 110)

The study concluded that the native tongue of the participants (Arabic) has an evident influence on their complimenting behaviour; their CRs can be attributed to CRs in of Arabic style. In a nutshell, the study found that culture has key role in the way people respond to compliments.

However, in the context of Pakistan, the complex phenomenon of complimenting behaviour has not been delved upon. Hence, there is a research gap regarding the younger generation's (Millennials) CRs and the ways their CRs differ from those of the older generation's (in this case university teachers). In the context of Pakistan, however, the current research is hoped to fill this gap. Moreover, it will give the readers and idea about subtle variations in the use of CRs. The study is, further, expected to help ensure the pragmatic competence of Pakistani nationals to succeed in cross-cultural and intergenerational contexts.

Research Methodology

Researching the speech acts mainly involves two approaches: qualitative (ethnography) and quantitative (elicitation). The current study, however, combines the two seemingly contrary approaches: using mixed method approach to achieve the specific objectives set for the study. Dornyei (2007) suggests mixed mode of inquiry owing to the fact that the strengths of one approach (e.g. qualitative) would curtail the shortcomings of the other mode of inquiry (e.g. quantitative) conversely, thus adding more to the credibility of the study's results. Mindful of these advantages of this research approach, the current study has employed mixed methods approach.

Instrumentation

To elicit the quantitative data, separate discourse completion tasks (DCTs) were designed: one for students and other for teachers. The respondents were provided with the DCT scenarios; with instructions for responding to compliments on possession, appearance, language ability, etc. Then, the respondents were told to interact with the imagined interlocutors in the given setting (See Appendix-A). The feature of social distance was addressed as follows: in DCTs for the teachers, the complimenter is a native speaker of English (male-male, and female-female) having equal status with complimentee (teacher-teacher). Similarly, in case of students, the complimenter, again is a native speaker (male-male, and female-female), having equal status with complimentee.

The Participants

The Participants of DCTs included 155 teachers and students from three universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: University of Peshawar, University of Swabi, and Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan. For the qualitative data of this study, the researchers interviewed 12 participants; out of which six were students and the rest (six) were teachers from University of Swabi and Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan. A few of the interviewed teachers had travelled aboard (UK and USA) and had the opportunity to interact with the speakers of English. While the interviewed students were EFL learners, who were enrolled for their undergraduate degree with English as major.

Theoretical Framework: Herbert's Taxonomy

The collected responses were categorized, according to Herbert (1990) Taxonomy, into the following patterns: Appreciation token, Compliment acceptance, Praise upgrade, Comment history, Reassignment, Return, Scale down, Question, Disagreement, Qualification, No acknowledgement, Request and interpretation. Herbert studied compliment responses. Based on his study of American English, he proposed an exhaustive list of 12 types or strategies. In order to explore compliment response types of the both genders, and age groups, this study would analyze compliment responses using the following Herbert's Taxonomy (See the table below).

Herbert's Taxonomy

Compliment Response Category	Instance
A. Agreement	
1. Acceptance	
▪ Appreciation Token	Thanks; thank you; [smile].
▪ Comment Acceptance	Thanks, I like it too.
▪ Praise Upgrade	Really brings out blue in my eyes, doesn't it?
2. Comment History	I bought it for the trip to Arizona.

3. Transfers	
▪ Reassignment	My brother gave it to me.
▪ *Return*	*So is yours.*
B. *Non-Agreement*	
1. Scale Down	It's really quite old.
2. Question	Do you really think so?
3. Non-Acceptances	
▪ Disagreement	I hate it.
▪ Disqualification	It's all right, but Len's is nice too.
4. No Acknowledgement	[Silence]
C. Other Interpretations	
1. Request	You wanna borrow this one too?

To ensure reliability and validity in the current study, the researchers used two different data sources (DCTs, and Interviews) aiming to ensure the triangulation of data. The scenarios provided in the DCTs were made as similar possible to the academic environment of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa universities. Criteria set for qualitative research, includes certain measures of trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Bowen, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure the credibility, the interview's transcripts were shared with the participants to ensure the respondent validation. To ensure Transferability (Morrow, 2005; Rolfe 2004) of the data, the research project was described in detail to the participants and an attempt was made to take into account different perspectives of the participants.

Data Analysis

SPSS version 17 was used for quantitative data analysis of the current study. The process included the calculation of descriptive statistics to delve into key differences in responses from age perspective in each situation. After the data was analysed, detailed descriptive statistics of the findings were generated. Following this,

tables were generated for DCTs' items. This helped the researchers delve into the differences in participants' choices in terms of age.

Thematic analysis was followed as guideline to analyse qualitative data for the current research study. For this purpose, the guideline proposed by Riessman (2008) and Creswell (2013) was followed. Since the interviews were conducted using mixed-code; the interviewees' native language (Pashto), and English, the first thing the researchers had to do was to translate and transcribe the interviews. While transcribing, specific codes were given to the participants (for example, TM1 - for teacher male 1 and SF3 for student female 3).

After the interview data was translated and transcribed, the transcript was read and re-read to trace the main themes emerging from it. To carry out the very process, firstly, common sentences and phrases among the participants' responses were marked. Secondly, a list was created and they were categorised into different response codes. Then, each scenario was compared separately, since detraining correlation between the different codes was way easier. As a next step, tables were generated related to each scenario, with code for responses collected. Finally, the tables were analysed.

The following sections describe the data analysis of this research. Tables are generated in advance to illustrate differences in the politeness strategies that both the age-groups used when responding to compliments given in English. The results of the study are ordered according to the significance.

CRs on appearance

An examination of CRs to compliments on appearance showed significant variations. The findings (see table 1) revealed that majority of the participants opted for acceptance, though the percentage of both the groups differed slightly. This indicates 'the impact of globalizations and proliferation of social networking sites' (Alsalem, 2015) on Pashto-speaking Pakistanis.

Table 1

 Teachers' vs. Students' Responses to a Compliment on Appearance

Compliment on Appearance * Cross Tabulation				
Frequency (Percentage)				
		Sample		Total
		Teacher	Student	
Compliment on Appearance	Compliment Acceptance	80 %	68 %	74 %
	Comment History	00 %	00 %	00 %
	Transfers	6.66 %	1.6 %	4.13 %
	Scale Down	3.33 %	26.4 %	14.86 %
	Question	6.66 %	2.4 %	4.53 %
	Non-Acceptance	00 %	00 %	00 %
	No-Acknowledgement	3.33 %	1.6 %	2.46%
Total		100%	100%	100%

The findings of the current study, from this perspective (generational perspective), are contradictory to those of Holmes (1986), since the study found more similarities than differences in the CRs used by Pashto-speaking Pakistanis. Another significant aspect of the findings that the data yielded, is the use of 'Non-Acceptance' by none of the participants. This marks deference, which is one of the important features of Pashtoon culture. Pashtuns according to the participants of the study are always welcoming and friendly to the guest. The Chi-square statistics (see table 2) has a p-value of 0.032, which is less than 0.05. Hence, differences in the politeness strategies applied by both the generations of Pashto-speaking Pakistanis while responding to compliment given in English on their appearance are significant.

Table 2

Chi-square Test 1

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	Degree of Freedom (df)	Asymptotic Significance	Exact Significance
Pearson Chi-Square	10.51	5	.032[a]	.032
Fisher's Exact Test	12.21	—	—	.032
No of Valid cases	155	—	—	—

CRs on personality

The table 3 below shows the frequencies of response types that both the generations of the respondents (Teachers and Students) used when they responded to a compliment on their personality character. The respondents were asked for responding to the compliment, "OMG! Thank you so much, you are so caring". The frequencies and percentages in response to this compliment are shown in the table:

Table **3**

Teachers' vs. Students' Responses to a Compliment on Character

Compliment on Personality: Character* Cross Tabulation				
Frequency (Percentage)				
		Sample		Total
		Teacher	Student	
Compliment on Personality: Character	Compliment Acceptance	66.66%	58.4%	62.53%
	Comment History	00%	00%	00%
	Transfers	6.66%	3.2%	4.93%
	Scale Down	10%	32%	21%
	Question	3.33%	0.8%	02%
	Non-Acceptance	00%	00%	00%
	No-Acknowledgement	13.34%	5.6%	9.47%
Total		100%	100%	100%

The findings show 'Compliment Acceptance' as the participants' favourite response type, though it was downgraded and not-acknowledged by a sizeable number of participants. Here, the participants' choices, according to them, were influenced by their native culture. One of them stated: "As you know, in Pashtun society we do, and we are supposed to help others. Everyone helps others. So, she shouldn't be worried" TF3. The younger generations' responses, like older ones, were also influenced by their culture. One the students explained: "It was my pleasure helping her because it was my moral duty to do so" SF2.

Again, like the previous scenarios, No-Acknowledgement was ignored by both the generations of the study. This consistent behaviour of the participants indicates their being showing deference for the guest, which is one of the basic tenets of Pashtunwali. The table 4 below represents the findings for the responses on personality character in terms of Chi-square.

Table 4

Chi-square Test 2

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	Degree of Freedom (df)	Asymptotic Significance	Exact Significance
Pearson Chi-Square	10.51	5	0.32	.032
Fisher's Exact Test	12.21			.032

The Chi-square statistics for CR on personality character is 10.51 with a p-value of 0.032. Here, as the p-value for both Chi-square and Fisher's Exact is less than 0.05, the result is significant. Thus, differences between the politeness strategies adopted by both the generations of the study, are significant.

CRs on language ability

To record the respondents' responses related to language ability, both the generations (teachers and students) were provided with slightly different scenarios. The teachers were provided with a scenario where they had compliment on a well-written paper that had been published in a reputed journal. On the other hand, the students were provided with a scenario where their well-written assignment in English was praised.

The table 5 below shows the frequencies of response types that both the generations of the respondents (Teachers and Students) used when they responded to a compliment on their Language Ability.

Table 5

Teachers' vs. Students' Responses to a Compliment on Language Ability

Compliment on Language Ability * Cross Tabulation				
Frequency (Percentage)				
		Sample		Total
		Teacher	Student	
Compliment on Language Ability	Compliment Acceptance	53.34%	42.4%	47.87%
	Comment History	00%	00%	00%
	Transfers	23.33%	32.8%	28.07%
	Scale Down	6.66%	5.6%	6.13%
	Question	6.66%	12.8%	9.73%
	Non-Acceptance	00%	00%	00%
	No-Acknowledgement	10%	6.4%	8.2%
Total		100%	100%	100%

The findings reveal that 'Compliment Acceptance' was the most favoured response type used by the participants. Here, again like the previous scenarios the participants' responses were motivated by their sense of being polite to the person coming from outside. Being polite and friendly to the guests is the hallmark of Pashtun society. The compliment was transferred by a vast majority of the participants. When asked about their motivation, one of the participants explained: "You know, we non-native speakers are always struggling with English. So, I believe she could write far better than me. That's the reason" SF3.

The compliment was questioned by a sizeable number of students. The reason that surfaced was being unable to judge the sincerity of the complimenter. Non-Acceptance, like other scenarios, was opted by none of the participants. This

consistency in the complimenting behaviour of Pashto-speaking Pakistanis is significant; since Pashtuns are always welcoming to guests and those coming from outside, hence we the option was used by none.

The findings presented in the table 6 show that Fisher's exact statistics is 3.11 with a p-values of 0.682. Thus, the findings indicate that differences between the politeness strategies adopted by both the generations of Pashto-speaking Pakistanis while responding to a compliment in English are not significant.

Table 6

Chi-square Test 3

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	Degree of Freedom (df)	Asymptotic Significance	Exact Significance
Pearson Chi-Square	2.2	5	.682[a]	.682
Fisher's Exact Test	3.11			.682

For language ability, a majority of teachers accepted the compliments. It is note-worthy here that the only subject that these teachers teach is English; their confidence regarding language abilities is not unexpected. Also, probably, they know the importance of publishing in an English-medium journal well and presenting a paper in a conference. On the contrary, students tend to accept compliment less frequently on their language ability. The low frequency might be partly due to the students' confidence in their language abilities when compared to the older generation. Therefore, they frequently question their language ability as compared to their teachers.

CRs on possession

The table 7 shows frequencies for response types used by both teachers and students in the given scenario i.e. responses to a compliment on possession.

Table 7

Teachers' vs Students' Responses to a Compliment on Possession

Compliment on Possession* Cross Tabulation				
Frequency (Percentage)				
		Sample		Total
		Teacher	Student	
Compliment on Possession	Compliment Acceptance	36.67%	42.4%	39.53%
	Comment History	00%	00%	00%
	Transfers	40%	38.4%	39.2%
	Scale Down	10%	5.6%	7.8%
	Question	10%	12.8%	11.4%
	Non-Acceptance	00%	00%	00%
	No-Acknowledgement	3.33%	0.8%	2.06%
Total		100%	100%	100%

For this scenario, like the previous ones, 'Compliment Acceptance' dominated all other response types, but the data showed only a slight difference between both the groups. The compliment was accepted as well as appreciated since the complimentee felt confident about their choices. One of the participants stated: "You know, I liked it, so bought it (laughed)" TF1. On the other hand, some of them thought it to be a polite and appropriate response in such situations. Similarly, some of them opted acceptance since it came from a guest. Since guests are respected in Pashtun society, so was their compliment in the situation.

Another salient response type that was frequently opted by the respondents, was 'Transfers'. Again, like the acceptance, both the generation showed a slight difference in its frequency. This might be due the Pashtuns straight-forward nature

that they did not exaggerate their possessions, instead they attempted to avoid praise, and be polite at the same time. 'Transfer' was followed by 'Question'. A sizable number of respondents doubted and questioned the compliments. This is partly because either they could not believe it, since the praise was unexpected for them. One of them stated while explaining: "Yeah, I got excited, but doubted because my bag was unexpectedly praised" TF3. Again, none of the respondents bothered to use "Non-Acceptance", for the same reason.

The table given shows the Chi-square test to determine the differences among the politeness strategies of both the generations of Pashto-speaking Pakistanis. The Chi-square statistics is 2.2, with a p-value of 0.682. The p-value is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Thus, differences among the politeness strategies used by both the generations of the study are not significant.

Table 8

Chi-Square Test 4

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	Degree of Freedom (df)	Asymptotic Significance	Exact Significance
Pearson Chi-Square	2.2	5	.682	.682
Fisher's Exact Test	3.11	_	_	.682

The results illustrated in table 8 show that the Chi-Square statistics for the compliment response on possession is 2.2, with a p-value of 0.68. The Fisher's exact test also shows that the p-value for this compliment response is greater than the significance level of 0.05. It means that differences among the politeness strategies employed by both the age groups of the respondents are not significant.

Pragmatic Transfer and CRs

Pragmatic transfer refers to the transfer of L1 sociocultural competence in performing L2 speech acts (Beebe et al, 1990). The use of L1 (Pashto) sociocultural,

and sociolinguistic norms was evident among some of the students' responses. The data also revealed some evidence of pragmatic knowledge in a teacher's responses as well. For instance, one of the participants reported, "Pashtuns are polite, particularly to the guests" TM2. The respondents, during their interviews, reported two reasons behind the phenomenon.

Firstly, the respondents imported the sociocultural knowledge of L1 (Pashto) to perform the speech act of complimenting in L2 (English) because of their attachment with the sociocultural norms of the society they lived in. Thus, the native culture in general, and Pashtunwali in specific, seemed to influence the way they performed the speech act of complimenting in L1 (English). Pashtunwali is the unwritten code of honour which governs Pashtun society. The main tenets of this code according to Khan (2014) are: Ghairat and Nang (Chivalry, hononur), Melmastya (hospitality), Purdah and Namus (gender boundries) and Jirga (council). While responding to a compliment, the students frequently referred to the second tenet: Melmastya (hospitality). This includes entertaining, feeding, and even defending a guest (Kakar, 2005). In other words, guests receive special treatment. For instance, a teacher said: "Pashtuns are polite, particularly to the guests" TM2. Referring to this aspect, a student added: "You know he is guest. So, I thanked him for respect" SM4. Adding more to the aspect, another student stated: "As you know, we Pashtuns are widely known for hospitality and being warm to the guests. That's why I smiled to her in response" SF2.

Secondly, the respondents imported L1 rules because they were conscious about their religion, religious beliefs and practices. Their religious beliefs and perceptions thus influence the way they responded in the provided situations. The use of word مذہب (religion) is quite evident in some students' responses. One of the students, when asked about what sort of responsibility is it, he said: "This is our religious responsibility" SM3.

A sizeable number of other students' complimenting behaviour was also shaped by religion: Islam. Another student, while explaining her response choice, interpreted her being glad to help her colleague save her phone as a religious obligation. She explained: "Because Islam obliges us to do so. That's why I was glad" SF2. "It is a virtuous deed (نیکی). Our religion urges to go for it" SM4. Following the same line, another student interpreted her response, while referring to the last

sermon of Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W). She said: "The Holy Prophet (PBUH) told us to be kind to humanity" SF5.

In conclusion, the students' complimenting behaviour, as evident from the excerpts provided, is influenced by their sociocultural norms, and religious perceptions and practices. In other words, they have brought their L1 (Pashto) into play while performing speech acts in L2 (English).

Findings

The quantitative findings revealed that both the generations of Pashto-Speaking Pakistanis did not use all the response types introduced by Herbert (1990). The study found that the respondents of the study, regardless of their age, tended to favour 'acceptance' while responding to compliments in the given situations, even though the strategies they applied differed, such as agreement, agreement with transfer etc. This aspect of the study contradicts the conclusion drawn by Holmes (1986) that people from western culture are more prone to accept compliments than the people coming from eastern cultures. In line with other studies conducted in Western Asia (Syria) by Nelson et al (1996), the findings of the current research study indicated that Pashto-speaking Pakistanis are the frequent accepters of compliments. This tendency was clearly indicated by both the generations (teachers and students). The results generated from the data also revealed that the respondents accepted and acknowledged the compliments that they received, with "thanks" or "Thank you". In some instances, even a question is followed by thanks. As a whole, similarity between the CR strategies of both the groups of the study was observed. This is probably due to the academic setting of the study, where the teachers seem to follow the native speaker model, and the students inadvertently imitate their teachers (Harwood & Hadley, 2004).

Culture has a far-reaching influence on language and vice versa (Feilin & Gaofeng, 2005). In words of Kramsch, (2001) "Etiquettes, expressions of politeness, social dos and don'ts shape people behaviour, and are formed through child rearing, and behavioural upbringing, schooling, professional training" (p. 14). Thus, it is safe to say that the complimenting behaviour of the speakers is influenced by culture, and cultural competence. In this study, the teachers appeared to be culturally more competent than the students because some of them had visited English countries. The students, on the contrary, had a limited exposure to English culture. As a result,

they firmly held to their cultural values and tended to respond in a way that was culturally acceptable to them (Alharbi, 2107).

The speakers who firmly held to their cultural values, when exchange compliments in cross-cultural settings, carry pragmatic rules and knowledge from their own culture to that of others' (Chang, 2009). In other words, such discursive events lead to pragmatic transfer. Numerous studies have noted this phenomenon, especially in the speech of second language learners (Huth, 2006). The participants of the current study, especially the students, who appeared to be pragmatically less competent than the teachers, attempted to come up with responses they perceived as the most appropriate, based on their understanding, and these answers seemed to be influenced by their native culture (Salameh, 2001). The participants' strong affiliation with their religion, which they reported during their interviews, influenced their complimenting behaviour. One the teachers explained her reason for the response saying, "It was God's scheme of thought that I saved it" TF1. This is an example of the pragmatic transfer. Some of the students' responses, as they reported, were shaped by their culture. Thus, it safe to conclude that the participants of the study showed evidence of pragmatic transfer when responding to compliments. These findings are consonant with the conclusions drawn by numerous researchers (e.g. Salameh, 2001; Sharifian, 2012 etc.), whose studies also found evidence of pragmatic transfer.

Conclusion

This research was an attempt to explore the concept of politeness from the perspective of compliment response strategies used by Pashto-speaking Pakistanis in academic setting. The findings reveal that regardless of the participants' generation 'Acceptance' was their favourite response type while responding to compliments in English. This shows "the impact of globalization and proliferation of social networking sites" (Alsalem, 2015) on Pashto-speaking Pakistanis. A plethora of empirical research studies are suggestive of the fact that despite having different sociocultural backgrounds, the differences in compliment response types used by English learners are negligible (Berqgvist, 2009; Enssaif, 2005; Othman, 2011). The findings of the study, from generational perspective, are contradictory to those of Holmes' (1986), as the study found more similarities than differences in the CRs used by Pashto-speaking Pakistanis. The findings of this study are consonant with

Sarkhosh and Alizadeh's (2017) study, which showed that the younger generation, regardless of gender, frequently accepted compliments.

In terms of politeness strategies, the study revealed that both the generations of the study (teachers and students) accepted the compliments. The teachers accepted compliment due to what is termed as Modesty Maxim by Leech (1983); they sought to minimize self-praise. Students, on the contrary, accepted the compliments for what they perceived as a suitable response. This is probably because of their almost no exposure to English culture. It is also pertinent to note that the younger generation's strategies, regardless of gender, were influenced by pragmatic transfer.

The study has implications for the kind of politeness strategies used by different cultures and it indicates a need for further research in this regard to enable greater intercultural awareness and competence among Pakistanis interacting with speakers from other cultures.

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Appendix-A

Discourse Completion Tasks for students

Please complete the task.

1. How old are you?

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2. Your gender?

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3. I am confident in speaking English.

   • Strongly agree

   • Agree

   • Neither agree nor disagree

   • Disagree

   • Strongly disagree

CR on Possession

Scenario one:

You are sitting in a cafeteria having your lunch. You put your brand new phone on the table. A student who has just arrived from Australia, and speaks little Pashto, walks into the cafeteria looking for a place to sit. S/he notices an empty seat near you and comes over and sits down. While eating her/his lunch s/he glances at your phone. S/he comments in English, "Wow, that's really a fancy phone you have there".

How would you answer?

o Thanks, I like it too.

o Thanks, your phone is /nice too.

o It's not bad. It was reasonably priced too.

o Really?

   o   Other answers

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CR on Language Ability

    Scenario two:

You have an assignment for your English teacher. S/he gives it to a student who has just arrived from UK to read it. This student from UK does not speak Pashto. S/he finds you in the cafeteria and tells you that s/he has read your assignment and found it very interesting and well written.

How would you respond?

   o   Thank you, I did spend a great deal of time on it.

   o   Thanks, I am sure you can write better than me.

   o   I should have added more references.

   o   Do you really think so?

   o   Other answers.

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CR on Language Ability

    Scenario three:

You are asked to give a presentation in class about your travels overseas. After your ten-minute presentation you go back to sit on your seat. The boy/girl sitting next to you says in English, "Your English is really good! I studied in England for years and I don't think I speak well as you do".

How would you respond?

- o Thank you, I did spend a lot of time in UK.
- o Thanks, but my English is nearly as good as yours!
- o I should have spent more time in UK.
- o Do you really think so?
- o Other answers.

CR on Appearance

Scenario four:

You are attending an end of your graduation ceremony at your university. The ceremony includes all local and international students who have been studying at the university. One of students from UK was presenting on his/her experience at the university. After s/he finished her presentation s/he came and sat next to you. You have spoken to him/her in English previously in classes. S/he notices that you have gone to the hairdresser to get your hair done for the graduation ceremony. S/he comments, "Your hair style really suits you, it looks so good on you".

How would you respond?

- o Thank you.
- o Do you really think so?
- o You just smile and let his/her comment slide.
- o You do not acknowledge compliment at all.
- o Other answers.

CR on Appearance

Scenario five:

You are sitting in your first lecture of the day. You notice a girl/boy with blonde hair walks into the classroom; s/he comes and sits next to you. Speaking in English, s/he introduces him/herself. S/he says that his/her name was John/Emma and s/he is visiting from Canada for three months. S/he notices your dress and comments, "your dress is beautiful, we never get dresses like that back in Canada."

How would you respond?

- o   Thank you.
- o   Smile and say, "You can get this dress in every shop here, everyone wears it.
- o   You just smile and let the comment slide.
- o   You do not acknowledge the comment at all.
- o   Other answers.

CR on Character (Personality)

Scenario six:

The lecture has just finished, and you decided to go home. You are waiting to catch a bus along with students. The bus arrives. While getting on to the bus, one of the students drops his/her phone down. You quickly pick it up and hand it over to him/her before s/he does. She says, "OMG thank you so much, you are so caring".

How would you respond?

- o   No worries, it's my pleasure.
- o   Thanks, I am glad to help.
- o   Nod and smile.
- o   Ignore the compliment and say, you are lucky that it did not get break.
- o   Other answers.